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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00
	EUR-00	VC-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	VCE-00
	AC-00	NSAE-00	OIC-00	OMB-00	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00	TRSE-00
	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	SAS-00

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O 122112Z MAR 04

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5419

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

USINT HAVANA PRIORITY

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D), B6

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 000883

NSC FOR CBARTON

USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD

STATE PASS USAID FOR DCHA/OTI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/11/2014

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, VE

SUBJECT: SUMATE SCRUBS THE CNE'S PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Classified By: Abelardo A. Arias, Political Counselor, for
Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

Summary

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3. (SBU) [] of the NGO Sumate gave an overview of the CNE's data, noting that the data received on March 7 did not/not match the figures announced by CNE President Francisco Carrasquero on March 2. For example, Carrasquero declared that 1,832,493 of the signatures were valid, but the new data gave the figure as 1,788,523, nearly 44,000 less. Carrasquero also said 876,017 signature forms were "under observation" for having similar handwriting ("planas" in Venezuelan Spanish). The new data says 893,466 forms, a difference of some 140,000 signatures.

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Logical Anomalies Abound

4. (SBU) [] noted that the CNE applied 38 different reasons for rejecting (or placing "in observation") the signatures, though the rules only specify five. The reasons, he said, have the appearance of being created as the work proceeded: some fingerprints were rejected for having "light fingerprints" and others for an undefined "error in

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fingerprint." Reason number "0," which invalidated nearly 300,000 signatures, was simply listed as "to be explained." Other reasons included "lack of information," "torn signature form," and "in physical search."

5. (SBU) [] announced that 7,297 forms had been returned unused or blank, which Sumate disputes. In any event, Palacios noted that 321 signatures had been credited to forms that were officially designated as "blank."

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He said the CNE had found 8,526 signatures ruled out because of "similar handwriting" criterion when there was no other similar handwriting on the form, creating the logical fallacy of how only one signature line on a form could be singled out for looking like another. Though the forms only had ten signature lines, 112 signature forms have more than 10

signatures each credited to them (one form supposedly contained 37 signatures).

6. (SBU) Perhaps most confusing was that the 38 reasons were not evenly applied to the final disposition of the signatures. For example, reason number "1," described simply as "annulled," resulted in 78,995 signatures sent to the appeals process and 191,479 that were rejected completely. Palacios questioned how the same criteria could have two different outcomes.

Location, Location, Location

7. (SBU) [] gave a state-by-state breakdown of the rejected signatures and those subject to appeal, claiming some states showed unusually high rates of rejection/appeal. [] showed a map of Caracas, in which hundreds of centers in the poorer western part of the city had 50 percent rejection/appeal rates, though rates of five percent prevailed in the opposition strongholds in the east. [] claimed this as evidence of an intent to force the opposition to mount the appeals process in pro-Chavez areas, where security risks for signers are higher.

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Appeals Process Not Feasible

8. (SBU) [] raised two key issues for making an appeals process work. First, how to inform those who need to go to the appeals centers. [] said the CNE's answer of publishing the identity numbers in a national newspaper,

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coupled with internet and other methods, could only reach about 500,000 people (the opposition needs a net gain of about 600,000 signatures). Second, how does one appeal the signature? The one-computer-per-center scheme offered by the CNE, in Sumate's opinion, would only allow 700,000 signatures to be processed (assuming only two days of appeals, which the GOV has said could be expanded to three days). [REDACTED] suggested that the best solution was for all signers to affirm their signatures in the appeals process, replace computers with a simple electoral "book" that can be signed, and allow up to ten lines per center. [REDACTED] said the opposition might need until mid-April just to get organized to make the process work.

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Comment

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